

SKYLARK operated in the New London area until February 1961, when she was sent to Key West, Florida. While deployed there, SKYLARK played a key role in a new Submarine Escape and Rescue film. SKYLARK also took part in tests of the STEINKE ESCAPE HCOD, which were conducted off Dry Tortugas. Commander (b) (6) (MSC), USN, and Lieutenant (b) (6) USN, made a 318 foot free ascent from USS BALAO (AGSS-285) to test and evaluate the hood under actual sea conditions. SKYLARK also underwent a highly successful ORI conducted by Commander Submarine Flotilla TWO during this period. SKYLARK then headed north, stopping at Port Everglades on 14-15 March. SKYLARK then steamed to Cape Canaveral, Florida, taking part in operational evaluation and testing of Polaris Missiles with USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT (SSBN-600). On 25 March 1961, SKYLARK headed home arriving in New London on 27 March. On 3 May, SKYLARK steamed to Charleston, South Carolina and relieved USS PETREL (ASR-14), which was being deployed to the Mediterranean. SKYLARK operated locally and called on Savannah, Georgia, 20 May, for an Armed Forces Day celebration. While there, a severe case of bends was treated by SKYLARK, resulting in the saving of a skin divers life. SKYLARK returned to New London on 7 June. In July, the ship was awarded the Battle Efficiency "E" Pennant for standing first in intratype competition for fiscal year 1961 in the Atlantic Fleet. In August, SKYLARK took part in a special Bureau of Ships ordnance test in the Chesapeake Bay area. SKYLARK operated locally for the remainder of the year taking part in FBM missile recoveries, towing a World War TWO target submarine to sea and on one occasion towed a disabled merchant ship into New London from sea.

On 8 January 1962, SKYLARK departed New London in company with USS BANG (SS-385), USS CORSAIR (AGSS-435) and USS JALLAO (SS-368). Upon making rendezvous with USS RUNNER (SS-476) on 9 January the formation proceeded to Rota, Spain, where SKYLARK became Flagship for Commander Task Force SIXTY-NINE. While in Rota, temporary repairs were effected for damage sustained from heavy seas while in transit. Upon departing Rota, Spain 23 January, the ship proceeded to Malaga, Spain, where she conducted dragging operations for a downed U. S. Air Force jet fighter plane until the evening of 24 January. SKYLARK then proceeded to Toulon, France where during her visit to this remarkable city, she conducted diving and mooring demonstrations for the benefit of the French divers and submarine personnel. On 8 February, the ship departed Toulon and returned to Malaga, Spain to continue the search for the jet aircraft. Discontinuing the search on the evening of 15 February, the ship proceeded to Palma, De Mallorca for an operational visit of a week duration thence to Golfo Di Palmas, Sardinia for a Fleet Conference thence to Naples, Italy, where the week of 5 March was spent towing a target sled for units of the Sixth Fleet. The ship departed Naples on 10 March and steamed to Cannes, France for a nine day visit on the French Riviera. While anchored in this harbor, SKYLARK was witness to the sinking of the cruise ship BENEZUELA of Italian registry and rendered all possible assistance to the stricken vessel. From Cannes, SKYLARK steamed to Malta, G. C. and was treated to a week of outstanding British hospitality. During the visit here, a demonstration of diving techniques were given for the benefit of the British Diving Team. Upon departing Malta, on 2 April, the ship proceeded to Athens, Greece for an eight day visit. On 16 April, the ship headed westward once more

arriving in Rota, Spain on 24 April, at which time she was given a "Well Done" for her outstanding performance by Commander, U. S. Sixth Fleet. She was also relieved of her duties as Flagship by USS TRINGA (ASR-16). On 26 April, the ship was homeward bound, arriving in New London on 7 May and remained in the area conducting local operations, including an ORI given by Commander Submarine Flotilla SIX on 5-6 June. On 9 June, SKYLARK was dispatched to a point off Baltimore, Maryland to assist in search operations for a downed U. S. Air Force transport plane. The search was discontinued on the afternoon of 17 June and SKYLARK returned to the New London area where she conducted local operations until 15 August 1962. She was awarded a commendation for her participation in the search operations. During the period 15-23 August 1962, SKYLARK's operations took her into the Nova Scotia operating areas and included a three day operational visit to Halifax, where, once again, she encountered the traditional British hospitality. During the period 24-31 August, the ship participated in operations with USS SAM HOUSTON (SSBN-609) and USS SAILFISH (SS-572) in the Virginia Canes operating areas. Included in this period was a two hour stop at Norfolk to embark a Turkish Navy Commander, who remained with the ship until her return to New London. SKYLARK remained in the New London area until 21 September, when she proceeded to Boston, Massachusetts to commence a three month overhaul period. The ship returned to New London on 21 December, where she remained for the remainder of the year. On 5 December 1962, Lieutenant Commander H. J. FIORE, USN, relieved LCDR C. N. OSBORNE, USN, as Commanding Officer.

(b) (6)